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HIJACK - HAMED
BY BERND DEBUSMANN

BEIRUT, OCT 27, REUTER - THE ILL-FATED HIJACKERS OF A LUFTHANSA AIRLINER TO SOMALIA BELONGED TO A PALESTINIAN SPLINTER COMMANDO GROUP, RELIABLE SOURCES SAID TONIGHT.

THEY SAID THE GROUP, RUN BY WADI HADDAD, BROKE AWAY FROM THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (PFLP), THE BIGGEST HARDLINE COMMANDO ORGANIZATION.

MR. HADDAD WAS COFOUNDER OF THE PFLP WITH GEORGE HABASH AND ONCE HEADED ITS FOREIGN OPERATIONS SECTION, WHICH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR A SERIES OF SPECTACULAR HIJACKINGS IN THE LATE 1960S AND EARLY 1970S.

HE DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT AFTER THREE AIRLINERS WERE HIJACKED TO A DESERT AIR STRIP IN JORDAN AND BLOWN UP IN 1970.

THE SOURCES SAID MR. HADDAD BEGAN BUILDING UP HIS OWN ORGANIZATION AFTER THE PFLP PUBLICLY DISSOCIATED ITSELF FROM HIJACKINGS FOUR YEARS AGO.

MORE REUTER 1916

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HIJACK - GAMES BEIRUT

PERSISTENT SPECULATION OVER THE EXISTENCE OF A PFLP SPLINTER GROUP WAS SUPPORTED TODAY BY A POSTER MOURNING THE DEATHS OF THREE HIJACKERS KILLED AT THE SOMALI CAPITAL OF MOGADISHU LAST WEEK WHEN WEST GERMAN POLICE COMMANDOS STORMED THE LUFTHANSA BOEING 737.

A FOURTH HIJACKER WAS WOUNDED SERIOUSLY IN THE COMMANDO RAID, WHICH FREED 86 HOSTAGES.

THE POSTER, SENT IN A SEALED ENVELOPE TO THE REUTER OFFICE HERE, CARRIED PICTURES AND BIOGRAPHIES OF THE THREE DEAD HIJACKERS AND DESCRIBED THEM AS MARTYRED HEROES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF STRUGGLE AGAINST WORLD IMPERIALISM.

THE POSTER WAS HEADED "POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE -- SPECIAL OPERATIONS" AND BORE THE EMBLEM THE PFLP USES ON ITS STATIONERY AND PUBLICATIONS.

HOWEVER, AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM THE BEIRUT-BASED PFLP TONIGHT DENIED INVOLVEMENT IN THE HIJACKING.

"THE FRONT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE," THE STATEMENT SAID. "IT HAS ... A TRADITION OF CLAIMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY OPERATION IT HAS ACTUALLY CARRIED OUT."

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